

Management plan would open conservation land

By Julie Pechilis
The Patriot Ledger

DUXBURY — Nearly 2,000 acres of conservation land owned by the town would become more accessible to hikers under a management plan the conservation commission is proposing to develop next year.

The plan would give the public more access to the land and would include schedules for timber harvesting to reduce the density of trees that block out the sun, causing the shrubbery that sustains wildlife to die out.

"We've asked the community to invest a lot in this land, we need to give it back to them," conservation commission Chairman Mark Mahoney told selectmen last night.

Mahoney said he realized the need for the plan when his wife asked him for a good map of conservation land and he found there was none.

Mahoney said management of the land would cost

Duxbury

about \$20,000 annually.

Selectmen Chairman Andre Martecchini agreed that the conservation land needs some attention.

"Now that we have all this investment, what do we do with it? It is a problem at this point," he said.

The commission has more land and more abutters than anyone else in town, according to Joe Grady, conservation administrator. He said it would be a sizeable job to visit all of the land in any given year, but one well worth undertaking since abutters "tend to feel that it might be theirs."

Town Manager Rocco Longo urged that the commission on disabilities be included in development of the management plan early in the process.

"It would be nice to have a park we could say was totally accessible to everyone," he said.

The conservation commission also proposed asking town meeting to automatically reset its land acquisition fund at \$100,000 each fiscal year, since this is the level that has been appropriated over the last few of years.

Mahoney said the commission has a list of 20 parcels under consideration for purchase, but added he has "a gut feeling there are no big, dramatic purchases here."

Last June, a special town meeting approved the purchase of 354 acres of conservation land from Camp Wing for \$1.5 million and three other parcels totaling 20 acres for \$576,500.

Selectmen last night approved an \$18,800 conservation commission acquisition of 4.7 acres owned by Norman Huff. The land adjoins conservation land at Waiting Hill. Money for the purchase will be drawn from the \$88,000 remaining in the conservation commission fund.

In other business, selectmen heard a report from department of public works Director Walter Tonaszuck

on the status of road repair and water line replacement projects.

Tonaszuck said a \$399,000 Chapter 90 allotment from the Massachusetts Highway Department was announced too late in the construction season to allow for repair and maintenance of eight miles of roads to begin before next spring.

Tonaszuck also said that the first half of a \$1.5 million project to replace vinyl-lined asbestos cement water mains is almost complete. In 1997, the mains were found to be the source of elevated levels of perchloroethylene, a possible carcinogen.

The second half of the project is scheduled for completion next July, at which point 56 percent of the pipes that showed elevated levels of PCE will have been replaced, Tonaszuck said.

Selectmen also granted an all-alcohol license to Goode Hospitality, which does business as the Sand Dollar Grill at 8 Chestnut St.